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The Publisher, Staff & Editors

From the Editor's Desk...

This past Friday, 10/30/98, will long be remembered. My original editorial was about the inadequacies of Netscape 4.5. That sucker cannot read frames with zeroed borders properly. I ranted and raved about how Barksdale is crying before the courts and the world about how MS has done his company dirty. Well the truth is Netscape is wearing the same dirty underwear. Netscape 4.5 appears to be deliberately written to ignore FrontPage 98 extensions. Then, as I was about to finish the compilation

of STReport I heard a strange sounding "hardware click" coming from my main cabinet. Was I shocked to find two of my, one year old, 4gb Western Digital Caviar Drives were going bad. One was generating bad sectors on its own and the other was developing a steady, loud clicking noise.

I was not too concerned because drives are so inexpensive these days that I felt a replacement would go easy and I would be in good shape because of my tape back-ups. So, I removed the bad drives and replaced them with new 6gb drives. I then discovered I needed to re-install Win98 to get the tape backup program running so I could restore from back-ups. Not so easy. Three quarters of the way through the restoration, I got an error message telling me "media unreadable". There goes an easy restoration out the window. I'll tell you now it took ALL WEEKEND to straighten this thing out. I eventually had to boot from the old sick drive and place the new drive as its slave. I then copied everything from the old "C" (boot) drive to the slave. I managed to get a tape backup of my "D" drive albeit it was an older backup that read fine and I was able to restore that drive to one of the other new mechanisms. Here's the beef: what is wrong with these programmers who have put together backup software for MS in Win98 that's obviously stripped down and crippled? Who are they kidding? It's the old, nickel and dime you to death \$\$\$\$ routine. Seagate provides a lame version of Backup Exec and MS puts it in their new Win98 package. Of course it'll run fine as long as you have no problems but the minute you have a problem its "jump through flaming hoops time". I am now searching for truly adequate tape back-up software. I finally got everything going properly but only after hours upon hours of effort. I tried to use Backup Exec v. 2.0b, but when it came to making the emergency restoration floppy disks.. it cried and cried about too many files for the disk. Who wrote the routine to det up the emergency disks?? The three stooges? Far too often, the user like me right now, is left in a lurch because of the efforts of a few greedy bean counters who feel they must extract the very last soo out of the user. I will not be forgetting my lost weekend too soon! Not to mention the late and enemic issue becuae of lost last minute files. I'd have them if the tape backup routine in Win98 had better coding..... Bad media my foot! At \$22.00 per tape it has to get better than this.

Ralph

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LATE BREAKING INDUSTRY-WIDE NEWS
Weekly Happenings in the Computer World
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Microsoft Wants Netscape Letter

Netscape attorneys failed to turn over all documents related to the antitrust suit against Microsoft, including a letter that could help the software giant's case, Microsoft lawyers said today in court filings.

That letter was dated two days after a key June 21, 1995, meeting in which Microsoft allegedly offered to illegally split the Internet software market with Netscape.

The letter by Gary Reback, an outside attorney hired by Netscape, was addressed to the Justice Department. The agency was investigating possible anti-competitive practices by Microsoft.

Reback's letter, however, never mentioned the alleged Microsoft offer, and Microsoft attorneys have asked the judge to impose sanctions on Netscape for failing to produce the document among requested pretrial material.

James Barksdale, Netscape's chief executive officer, admitted during sharp cross-examination last week that he never mentioned the alleged Microsoft offer in written correspondence after the June 1995 meeting.

Today marks Barksdale's fourth day of testifying in the Microsoft's trial, which entered its second week.

Microsoft was expected to confront Barksdale with e-mails from his own employees, who complained angrily in the messages about their own Internet software as shabby and bug-ridden. Some even praised Microsoft's browser, which provides access to the Internet, as technically superior.

The e-mails, many laced with obscenities, are important to Microsoft, which is trying to show that Netscape's business failures were its own fault, not due to allegedly illegal acts by Microsoft. Netscape once claimed nearly 90 percent of Internet browsers used, but it now has about half the market.

In the weeks before the trial, Microsoft subpoenaed copies of about 4,000 e-mails by Netscape employees written over the last two years. The messages were part of the company's informal ''bad attitude'' and ''really bad attitude'' forums, in which workers griped about everything from cafeteria food to product marketing.

The ''really bad attitude'' forum existed as a private e-mail discussion list run by Netscape engineer Jamie Zawinski, who wrote about the subpoena on his personal Web site. When Netscape lawyer Kent Walker notified Zawinski of Microsoft's subpoena, Walker said he hoped ''we've followed the document retention policy and deleted materials older than 90 days, but I fear we haven't.''

''In hindsight, complying with the document retention policy ... might have been a good idea,'' Zawinski wrote later.

The government contends that Microsoft's actions contributed directly to

Netscape's business problems. It released about 150 pages of new evidence Friday that it said illustrate Microsoft's illegally aggressive tactics, such as giving away expensive business software to Internet providers in exchange for converting customers from Netscape's browser.

A June 1996 note described Microsoft offering ``several thousand dollars'' of free consulting to Toys R Us if the company redesigned its Web site to encourage customers to switch to Microsoft's browser.

Another e-mail, sent by Barksdale in January 1997, described Apple Computer Inc.'s decision to distribute Microsoft's browser along with Netscape's. Barksdale said Microsoft had threatened not to develop its important package of business software, called Office 97, for Apple.

Barksdale wrote that former Apple Chairman Gil Amelio told him Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates ``said that was his only requirement to get his support for Office 97 on the (Apple Macintosh computer).''

The documents also illustrate Netscape's troubles selling its own browser after Microsoft began giving its away free. Internet providers that had been distributing Netscape's suddenly switched to distribute Microsoft's.

Netscape, in response, began giving away its browser in January.

Microsoft Says Netscape Meeting Was A Setup

Microsoft Corp. accused Netscape Communications Corp. of using a meeting between the two companies in 1995 to create material for the Justice Department's antitrust probe of the software giant.

As the landmark trial against Microsoft entered its second week, the company also complained to the court that the government had kept new documents about the meeting hidden until Saturday.

What actually happened at the June 21, 1995, meeting is crucial to the case brought by the federal government and 20 states against Microsoft.

The government and Netscape charge that Microsoft illegally proposed dividing the market for Internet browser software and threatened to crush Netscape if it did not cooperate. Microsoft has denied any wrongdoing and told the court last week that Netscape must have invented its account of the meeting.

On Monday, Microsoft lawyer John Warden kept up his attack on Netscape's credibility in a fourth day of cross examining Netscape Chief Executive Jim Barksdale.

``Isn't it a fact that the June 21, 1995 meeting was held for the purpose of creating something that could be called a record to be delivered to the Department of Justice to spur them on to action against Microsoft,'' Warden asked.

``That's absurd,'' Barksdale replied.

The government's case relies in part on notes Netscape co-founder Marc Andreessen made of the meeting.

The latest documents include those notes attached to a letter sent a day later, on June 22, 1995, to the Justice Department by Netscape outside counsel Gary Reback.

The Reback letter and attached note would seem to help buttress the government's position that Andreessen's account of events was immediate and accurate.

In his letter, Reback says: ``The general theme of the negotiation has been that Microsoft owns the platform (the Windows system needed to run Netscape's browser on personal computers) and that if Netscape is going to compete with Microsoft in any way... then Microsoft will competitively harm Netscape.'' Government lawyer David Boies told reporters outside the court that the Justice Department trial team had not known about the new documents until they were alerted by Reback himself.

Boies said the new documents -- which he called ``devastating'' to Microsoft's case -- had been provided to the Justice Department in 1995 in a different investigation.

The trial before District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson is expected to last into December. The government has plans to release video taped excerpts of pretrial testimony by Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates on Tuesday.

Free Speech Groups Sue to Stop Child Protection Act

The same coalition of free speech groups that successfully fought the Communications Decency Act is reprising its role with Thursday's legal challenge against a statute the coalition says would effectively be just as harmful to online speech.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) and the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) said in a press conference in Philadelphia they are seeking an injunction against the Child Online Protection Act (COPA), which passed into law Wednesday along with other technology measures in the \$520 billion federal spending plan.

The lawsuit was filed in federal District Court in Philadelphia, the same court where the original CDA challenge was filed. The COPA law is set to go into effect in 30 days.

"Whether you call it the 'Communications Decency Act' or the 'Congress Doesn't Understand the Internet Act,' it is still unconstitutional and it still reduces the Internet to what is fit for a six-year-old," said Ann Beeson, an ACLU attorney, in a statement on the lawsuit.

The law's passage is proof that legislators are more than willing to "make children the excuse for ill-conceived censorship schemes," said David Sobel, legal counsel for EPIC.

"Congress has demonstrated that, when it comes to the Internet, it's prepared to score easy political points at the expense of constitutional rights," Sobel said in a statement on the lawsuit.

COPA would make it a crime for the operators of commercial Web sites to post material deemed "harmful to minors" under its established legal standard, which includes graphic sexual content.

Violators would be subject to up to six months in jail and fines of up to \$50,000 per offense. Sites would be exempt from prosecution if they used credit-card numbers or other age-verification schemes to block youngsters under age 17 from graphic materials.

The original CDA, struck down by the Supreme Court in a near-unanimous ruling last year, was much broader than the COPA statute.

The CDA applied to e-mail and newsgroups as well as to the World Wide Web. But COPA applies only to "commercial" sites, and replaces the terms "indecent" and "patently offensive," which the Supreme Court said were too vague, with the already-set "harmful to minors" legal definition.

Material that is "harmful to minors" is defined under the law as being "prurient" and "lacking in serious artistic, political, literary, or scientific value" specifically when viewed by minors.

A spokeswoman for COPA's sponsor, Rep. Mike Oxley, R-Ohio, told ZDNN earlier this month that the bill was carefully crafted to avoid the First Amendment violations that doomed the CDA.

"It is important to note that 'harmful to minors' material cannot be sold or shown to minors by commercial establishments in other forms, like books, movies and magazines," Oxley spokeswoman Peggy Peterson said. "COPA applies that same common sense standard to the World Wide Web."

The law has also been applauded by the anti-pornography group Enough is Enough, which was among the most vocal advocates of the CDA.

But the ACLU coalition, which also includes news organizations, academics, physicians' organizations, and gay rights groups, maintains COPA would ban "a wide range of protected expression that is provided for free on the Web by organizations and entities who also happen to be communicating on the Web for commercial purposes."

Credit-card age verification schemes, according to the ACLU coalition, are unlikely to be effective in screening out youngsters, and could not realistically be used by news sites containing material that could potentially be viewed as "harmful to minors."

And since many Web sites now host online chats, bulletin boards and free e-mail services, the content in those areas could arguably come under the law, making it in effect as sweeping as the CDA, coalition officials said.

The coalition also noted that even the U.S. Justice Department has criticized the new law.

In a seven-page analysis sent to President Clinton by Justice Department officials on Oct. 5, they concluded the law had "serious constitutional problems" and could potentially draw law enforcement resources away from efforts to track down online child predators and pornographers.

Justice Department officials also said in their analysis that the law would be ineffective because minors could still access newsgroups and any Web sites generated outside the U.S.

"It is our fervent hope that Attorney General (Janet) Reno will concede that the new law is unconstitutional so we can avoid prolonged litigation," said Barry Steinhardt, president of the EFF, in a statement.

Among the members of the ACLU coalition are Time Inc., Warner Bros. Online, CNet, the New York Times Online, OBGYN.Net, Philadelphia Gay News, Salon Magazine, the American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression, MSNBC, CBS New Media, Playboy Enterprises, PlanetOut Corp., and ZDNet, publisher of ZDNN.

AOL Complaints Surface in Maine, New Hampshire

Some America Online users in New Hampshire and Maine have found that getting connected to the Internet can carry an unpleasant surprise - long-distance telephone bills that were not supposed to exist.

"We had in excess of 20 (complaints) in the past couple of months ... localized around the Nashua area," said Walter Maroney, chief of the consumer protection bureau of the New Hampshire attorney general's office.

Maroney said complaints to his office involve only AOL, the country's largest online service, with 14 million subscribers. "I'm not familiar with similar complaints regarding ... other companies. It appears to be limited to America Online," he said. "We are looking into it."

The problem - which appears to have bypassed Vermont - involves people joining America Online for the first time, according to Maine and New Hampshire officials.

New subscribers choose telephone numbers they want their computers to dial when connecting to AOL, usually a local number.

But the software reportedly dials a different, long-distance number sometimes and there's no way to tell until the telephone bill arrives.

America Online disputed that allegation, but would not comment on the specific Nashua-area complaints.

AOL has said the problem happens when users don't choose local phone numbers or choose long-distance numbers as backups, which are dialed when the local number is busy.

America Online also has pointed fingers at telephone companies, saying they misroute some calls.

But Maine and New Hampshire officials challenge that claim.

"There's no way for Bell Atlantic to divert those calls. It's not a switching problem," said Maryann Lutz of the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission.

''It's not the phone company. It's solely AOL, their installation disk,'' said Phil Lindley, spokesman for the Maine Public Utilities Commission. ''It has access to AOL's database of numbers ... but it's not dialing the right one.''

In Maine, some consumers have complained about phone bills that in one case topped \$1,200.

Maine and New Hampshire have only one area code in the entire state. Vermont also is a one-area-code state, but it has gotten few complaints about unexpected long-distance calls, perhaps because Vermont handles in-state long-distance calls differently.

''We haven't received very many complaints about this. And I'm sure that the reason is that we do have 11-digit dialing,'' said Dina Frankel, director of consumer affairs for the Vermont Department of Public Service.

When area codes started being used up, telephone companies gave states the option of dropping the requirement that in-state long-distance calls be preceded by a 1 and the state area code.

New Hampshire and Maine dropped the requirement, which is why seven digits will dial any number in the state, whether local or long distance.

Vermonters, however, are stuck with having to dial 1 and the state area code to call telephone exchanges outside their local calling areas.

Officials surmise this makes it difficult for software to choose a long-distance number accidentally, and alerts AOL customers to long-distance dialing because they hear four extra beeps from the modem.

Whatever the case, officials say the situation is not only expensive but irritating.

''People get frustrated because they call the phone company, and they say to call America Online, and America Online says to talk to the phone company,'' said Lutz of the PUC.

In Maine, Lindley urged people to check phone bills so they can catch mistakes early.

''Some of these bills have gone on for two or three months before they were noticed,'' he said.

However, he also said the problem reflects the increasing complexity of society, from complicated phone bills to complicated computers.

''AOL is like computers, and computers still aren't user-friendly. Until computers are as easy to use as the telephone or television, you're going to have this problem,'' he said.

''My grandma can use the telephone 100 times out of 100,'' he said.

Federal regulators announced Wednesday a first-ever nationwide sweep against fraud over the Internet by people promoting stocks and deceiving investors.

The Securities and Exchange Commission said it took 23 enforcement actions against 44 people and companies for allegedly violating federal securities laws by not disclosing payments they received from companies whose stock they promoted. The stock promotions, known as "touting," were made in Internet junk mail, online newsletters, message board postings and Web sites. Such touting is not illegal in and of itself, but any compensation received from the companies must be fully disclosed.

Open Code Frees Up the Net

To date, the idea that software developers working within multiple organizations without compensation to call their own could possibly mount a serious challenge to Microsoft's hordes of wealthy or soon-to-be-wealthy programmers -- working from the safe solidity of a near-monopoly in the programs that control the operations of desktop, portable and server computers -- has been scoffed at as the wishful thinking of the company's plentiful but weak detractors.

Indeed, the dissemination of free software whose basic instructions are open to a worldwide community of developers to improve or alter has made little dent in mainstream corporate planning. Such "open source" code and the entire free software movement have been seen as occasionally successful, mainly in the delivery and maintenance of the widely used Apache Web server that still outguns Microsoft and Netscape Communications Corp.'s commercial challengers.

But a closer look at the record of development of Web-based computing puts the efforts in a much different light. In fact, the free software movement has delivered commercial-quality products in every key component of software infrastructure for computing in a hyperlinked world. Free software gave the Internet much of its start, from the Mosaic browser to the basic Web server. Obscure innards such as the Domain Name System, which translates numeric Internet addresses into English names such as www.baby.com, and domain name servers come from the same heritage. Now, operating systems are in the collaborative developers' crosshairs, from the much-publicized Linux flavor of Unix to Free BSD, the software that is at the heart of the most heavily trafficked site on the Web, Yahoo! Inc.'s www.yahoo.com.

And with the use of Web sites to conduct electronic commerce likely to spread like wildfire -- some estimates put the amount of worldwide e-commerce at \$344 billion by 2002 -- more and more companies are likely to move to adopt the programs that become Web standards, with the fact that they are free as an extra, compelling incentive.

Earlier this year, SBC Communications Inc. replaced 36 Windows 95 and Windows NT workstations at its Kansas City, Mo., operations center with Linux workstations because they handled the results of a giant network monitoring system better. The system displays warning alarms triggered on the network of a subsidiary, Southwestern Bell. The graphics-intensive system caused the Windows 95 workstations "to lock up on average every 4.2 minutes. The Windows NT workstations locked up every 2.58 minutes,"

said Randy Kessell, a manager at the center. The Linux workstations haven't had a problem.

Gary Nichols, manager of network administration at WavePhore Inc.'s WaveTop business unit which distributes content from Time Inc., People and Money magazines and Warner Bros., was asked to rebuild the corporate network a year ago.

"I completely modeled the network around the Internet," and was surprised to find free source code such as the Apache Web server, the PERL scripting language, the Samba network connection and the MySQL (Structured Query Language) relational database, "were just as useful inside the company as on the Internet." Nichols runs Linux on 30 of WaveTop's 45 servers for such tasks as e-mail, Web servers and the firewall. He figures he saved \$30,000 in license costs of Windows NT and Sun Microsystems Inc.'s Solaris by using the open source code.

"I bought \$100 worth of Linux CDs and books and got the same functionality," he said.

These examples illustrate how Microsoft no longer dictates the standards that determine the business computing environment, and how difficult it will be to dominate the standards set for doing business on the Web. Microsoft acknowledged as much in a Sept. 25 financial filing that said one of the few threats on its horizon was Linux. The company still dominates in desktop applications. There are no open source code equivalents -- yet -- for Office-style word processing, presentation graphics and spreadsheets. But the importance of the operating system itself has receded. Both browsers and Web servers can do their jobs while remaining indifferent to the underlying operating system.

Of course, skeptics doubt that complex software can be developed consistently by open source code groups, which tend to form voluntarily under loose leadership. "I'm very leery of the shared source code movement," primarily for the known difficulty of complex software development, said Hadley Reynolds, director of research at the Delphi Group, himself a Microsoft skeptic.

Support of open source code, often provided by e-mailed responses from its developers, strikes information systems managers as a key weakness. They want someone under contract to fix glitches on demand.

Still, the Apache Web server is so reliable that it has gained 52 percent of the market against commercial competition from Netscape (7 percent) and Microsoft (23 percent). IBM Corp. recently joined the Apache Group as a contributing developer and announced it will support Apache for customers of its WebSphere application server product line, another form of commercial support for an open source code product.

What looked like a few amateurish success stories is now turning into a movement with much larger implications. Microsoft may be able to stretch out an antitrust showdown with the U.S. Department of Justice. But software developers have a way of changing the nature of computing on their own.

Indeed, free solutions come because developers confront a problem "that has no commercial solution, or the commercial solution is viewed as overpriced," said Larry Wall, developer of PERL.

But it is the very nature of these new economics that makes many

companies worry. The rap against the free software movement is that it will fall down from eventual lack of momentum -- meaning that source code developers can't continue to do this without some means of financial support.

The developers themselves disagree. They don't need to be paid for their efforts. It's intrinsic to the Internet culture to collaborate in solving the next problem, and they enjoy the camaraderie of doing so. They also save their companies' money, while their employers make money on other software or services for which they can charge.

If this drive is true, it means the ability of one company to maintain a stranglehold over any key aspect of computing will draw to an end. Neither Microsoft nor any other commercial company will be able to position itself as controlling access to the Internet. And that means the DOJ with its antitrust suit has arrived on the battleground too late to play a decisive role in overturning any monopolies in software.

"We're building the infrastructure for what the world will look like" as it switches over to a digital economy, said Eric Tachibana, co-founder of Extropia Inc., a developer of open source Web site applications, such as WebStore and Groupware, which are available from its site. Its applications are in use at Boeing Co. and General Motors Corp.

It wasn't intended to be this way. Proponents of the open source code movement, such as the Apache Group's Brian Behlendorf and Wall, said they didn't set out to beat commercial companies, and in many cases it wasn't on their agenda to produce something that the rest of the world would use.

"Open source developers are technical people who sense a need for a piece of system-level software that doesn't exist yet," said John Ousterhout, author of the TCL scripting language used to tie together disparate site elements. He was an open source code advocate as a computer science professor at the University of California at Berkeley when he invented TCL in 1988. TCL now is widely used on Web sites to pull together Common Gateway Interface scripts, Java applications and database access programs.

But sharing source code in 1988 was a more laborious effort. In those days, a developer interested in TCL would send him a big, half-inch magnetic tape reel of the sort used to store mainframe data, and Ousterhout would take it downstairs from his office to the machinery room in Evans Hall, where he would load it on a Unix host and copy the data onto it. Then he'd take it to the post office to mail back to its sender. That method would make it impractical to send out the 8,000 to 10,000 copies of TCL that go out to prospective users per month over the Internet, he said.

So far, open source successes "have been largely infrastructure software," said Tim O'Reilly, publisher at O'Reilly and Associates Inc. (www.ora.com). That's the kind of software that made IBM and Microsoft powerful, each in their own eras of computing. Now, that very infrastructure -- the Internet -- makes possible both the long-distance developers' collaboration and the distribution of their software, he said. Never before could a piece of free software have instant worldwide availability and testing by thousands of developers.

The Linux example has begun to elicit interest among venture capitalists. Kevin Harvey, a partner at Benchmark Capital in Menlo

Park, Calif., sees "a community of developers working together [as] a big and proven trend." They are likely to find the bugs in a system as they configure and use it with a wide variety of other components.

Both Benchmark and Greylock Management Corp., a Boston venture capital firm, have taken minority positions in Red Hat as the company seeks to expand its staff and more vigorously push the distribution of Linux.

Robert Young, president of Red Hat, "is doing exactly the right thing. He knows where he wants to go and the market is behind him," said Michael Tiemann, founder of Cygnus Solutions, a tools and services open source code company. Cygnus is built around its GNU's Not Unix open source code project, which was founded by Richard Stallman to create tools and compilers for Unix developers. Cygnus gained the backing last year of two venture capital firms, August Capital of Palo Alto, Calif., and Greylock.

Some developers fear venture capital could prove to be the undoing of the movement. If developers start counting on making money on open source code by creating private companies around it, they may get into struggles over who controls the code, and it may cease to be open code.

But they also acknowledge that venture capital and private companies are needed to address the Achilles' heel of open source code: technical support for products that have on around-the-clock technical staffs or on-site assistance. The business model for open source companies is to add to the open source developers' efforts in packaging, marketing and support, but not to try to take control, said John Oltsik, an analyst at Forrester Research Inc.

If open source code development broadens, it is not likely that there will be a single company that ever takes Microsoft's place in the center of networked computing. Instead, there will be many cells, each making its own contribution. Indeed, Red Hat's Young jokes that his goal is not to make his company as big as Microsoft, but to make Microsoft as big as Red Hat.

At open source company Extropia, Tachibana, 29, said his company's giveaway applications attract so much development work that he farms it out to selected developers. He and his partner, Gunther Birznieks, also 29, continue to develop generic Web site applications to be given away, such as Extropia's WebChat for group interaction.

The practice keeps a steady flow of work passing through the doors of Extropia as the pair builds a network of 20 skilled developers with whom they wish to collaborate. And if they develop an application that becomes part of every Web site, there will be many ways to convert that success into a long-term business.

It's as if Lilliputians came to hold sway over Gulliver. Size will not matter on the Internet, only usage of your product. "I feel we could have an open source code company that is just as successful as Microsoft," Tachibana said.

With the advent of the Internet, the free software movement has flourished, rendering the U.S. Department of Justice's antitrust case against Microsoft too little too late.

It's not altogether necessary to pay for software if you want to run an effective Web site. Networks of developers have collaborated on creating

free software whose lines of code are "open" to improvement by other parties for key pieces of Web infrastructure.

Paralyzed U.S. Man Controls Computer With Thoughts

A paralyzed Georgia man who received a tiny brain implant has become the first human to control a computer using only his thoughts.

Known only by his initials, J.R., the 53-year-old man was the second person to receive the implant, about the size of the tip of a ballpoint pen, but only the first to successfully communicate with a computer using his thoughts, Dr. Roy Bakay, who developed the implant with Dr. Phillip Kennedy, told Reuters.

''What we've done is enabled a patient who was unable to move his limbs or speak to communicate through a computer,'' Bakay, an Emory University researcher, said. ''We have him think about movement. This sends a signal to a receiving unit in his scalp, which sends a message to the computer screen.''

''It's like operating an on/off switch.'' he said. ''The person thinks about the activity, electrical activity in his brain increases and sends a message to control the cursor.''

The implants consist of two tiny hollow glass cones coated with neurotropic chemicals extracted from the recipients' peripheral nerves. The chemicals encourage nerves to grow into the cones, penetrating the glass, Bakay said.

''This puts the cells inside the cone so it keeps the cells going for a very long time. It is critical to train these cells in a stable environment,'' he said. ''The nerve tissue grows into the cone and forms contacts or synapses.

''It's those signals that we pick up. It's like having a little piece of isolated brain within the glass cone. We are able to run electrical activity off of that.''

Although Bakay said the research, which began 12 years ago, is in its infancy, future steps may include training ''a whole series of cells to do things. There is tremendous potential.''

He said the goal is to improve a recipient's ability at the computer so he would be able to type letters and send e-mail. ''We'd like to get them on the Internet and open communications to the rest of the world, and vice versa.

''After that, we'd like for them to use the computer to control their environments, turn lights on and off, adjust a bed, call an attendant, turn the TV on or off. Finally, we hope they will be able to run prosthetic devices, wheelchairs, even prosthetic limbs''

Bakay and Kennedy decided to use glass cones because metal ''pokes holes into cells and they die,'' he said.

The two people who have received the implants were both very ill, Bakay said.

The first recipient died of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease) before she could be trained to control the computer cursor, he said.

J.R. is also in poor health, hospitalized at the U.S. Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Decatur, Georgia, near Atlanta. A massive stroke paralyzed him and left him on a ventilator.

Bakay said the first recipient was ''only able to move her eyes up and down and sideways a little bit,'' but died three months after receiving the implant.

''She was able to prove all our basic premises for us,'' Bakay said. ''She helped us identify the cells we were looking for in this project.''

The prognosis for the second patient, who has mastered such simple computer commands as up, down, left and right, remains uncertain. Bakay said he was taken to a hospital intensive care unit Wednesday night after developing respiratory problems.

''When he gets sick he can't work,'' Bakay said. ''The mind doesn't function well. It's difficult working with him when he is at his best, but we're learning a lot from this fellow.''

Bakay said a third recipient likely would be chosen next year after he and Kennedy fully understand how much the current subject can accomplish. But he said the project has very limited financing.

Bakay and Kennedy experimented first with monkeys at Yerkes Regional Primate Center in Atlanta, then won permission from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to try the implants on three human recipients.

The project's biggest impediment has been money.

''Dr. Kennedy and I are two overworked clinicians who still have patients to see,'' Bakay said. ''We need some help. We are hoping some venture capitalist will be interested.''

Sun To Unveil Next Generation of Solaris

Sun Microsystems Inc. will unveil a major upgrade of its Solaris operating system Tuesday as part of an increasing focus by the computer workstation maker on its growing software business.

Sun will host a news conference in New York to roll out its 64-bit Solaris, its version of the UNIX operating system that will run on the highest performing servers and workstations.

Sun said its new software is a generation ahead of the next much anticipated upgrade of Microsoft Corp.'s Windows NT. Sun's upgrade of Solaris, called Solaris 7 (which skips several numbers in the upgrade cycle from the current Solaris 2.6), moves data in chunks of 64 bits, as opposed to the 32-bit chunks that most computers process currently.

Danish Scientists Develop Atom-size Computer Chip

Danish scientists said Monday they had created a chip where a single atom jumping back and forth could generate the binary code which is the basis of digital information used by computers.

Applying this technique - which might only become commercially viable in a decade or two - information stored today on a million CD-roms could be stored on a single disc, said physics doctor Francois Grey, the team leader. "Society seems to find use for this," he said, referring to the search for ever smaller units in various technological applications.

Vice President Gore Unveils World's Fastest Computer

Vice President Al Gore unveiled the world's fastest computer Wednesday, able to make 3.9 trillion calculations per second. The computer is about 40 million times more powerful than the one that put John Glenn into space 36 years ago. Glenn, 77, America's first man in orbit, returned to space aboard the space shuttle Discovery Thursday.

The Department of Energy's Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory will use the new computer, called Blue Pacific, in California as part of a program that uses simulations to test the safety, security and reliability of nuclear weapons without underground explosions.

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HIGH-TECH INDUSTRY SAYS EDUCATION IS KEY TO WORKER SHORTAGE

Pleased over the recent passage of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act, which raises the annual number of temporary, professional-worker visas from 65,000 to 115,000 over the next three years, members of the high tech say better education in the U.S. is the long-term solution to worker shortages. "Now that employers have some temporary assistance with the high-tech worker shortage, our nation needs to turn its attention to ensuring that American students are getting the proper education to make them competitive in today's and tomorrow's job markets," says the director of human-resources policy at the National Association of Manufacturers. "What we're most interested in are those skill sets not available here," says the president of CTS International, a high-tech recruiter. "It's a global marketplace. In order to be competitive in the marketplace, we must have [access to] the best technology and personnel." (EE Times 24 Oct 98)

"GRASSROOTS" LOBBY EFFORT ROOTED AT AT&T

The Prince George's Coalition Against Hidden Taxes, supposedly a grassroots lobbying effort organized in Maryland, has been revealed to be a massive effort by AT&T to defeat proposed legislation that would charge a fee of 3% of gross revenues generated by telecom companies seeking to use public rights of way to lay cable, string wire, or plant cellular towers to provide new services. AT&T considers the legislation unfair because it singles out telecommunications companies from other users of public land, such as sanitary commissions and gas & electric companies. Calling the Coalition's media campaign a "massive fraud," the Prince George's County chief executive said, "This isn't any citizens coalition. This is a bunch of giant companies trying to profit off the public for free." (Washington Post 24 Oct 98)

GOV'T TELLS ICANN IT CAN'T (YET)

U.S. Commerce Dept. officials have told the authors of the leading proposal for domain name privatization that their plan still needs some work: "The Department of Commerce regards the ICANN [Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers] submission as a significant step toward privatizing management of the domain name system," wrote Becky Burr, associate administrator of the department handling the issue. "We note, however, that the public comments received... reflect significant concerns about substantive and operation aspects of the ICANN." The proposal for the new corporation was submitted by the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA), the University of Southern California group that has long contracted to manage the technical aspects of the Internet's address system. A Washington, D.C., lawyer who helped IANA draft its proposal notes that his group will examine the comments and see what changes should be made, but added, "It would not be successful to accept ideas from small groups of people and then lose the support of large groups." (TechWeb 23 Oct 98)

FRACTAL MODELS FOR MANAGING INTERNET TRAFFIC

Researchers at AT&T Labs and the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab are looking for new ways to manage networks that carry more data than voice traffic, and suggest the mathematics underlying so-called fractal behavior could serve as a basis for more efficient models of data networks. (A geometric object has fractal characteristics if a magnified piece of the object resembles the original pattern.) In the case of data traffic, bursts of activity show up in approximately the same spiky pattern over a wide range of time scales -- from milliseconds to minutes. "The finding of the fractal nature of Internet traffic can be viewed as a promising start toward solid characterizations of Internet traffic," Walter Willinger and Vern Paxson conclude in the September issue of Notices of the American Mathematical Society. (Science News 17 Oct 98)

SPAMMER SUED BY WASHINGTON STATE

The owner of a company called Natural Instincts is being charged by Washington State for violation of its four-month-old legislation against sending unsolicited bulk e-mail ("spamming"). The solicitations --which used forged return addresses and were sent under the subject line "Did I

get the right e-mail address?" -- offered customers access to 50,000 e-mail addresses for \$39.95. Washington's attorney general Christine Gregoire says that the messages "clearly crossed the boundary from being annoying to being illegal." (ZDNet 23 Oct 98)

E-BOOKS TO COME SINGING DOWN THE WIRE

Saying that "if you can get to the Web, you can buy a book -- instantly," the chief executive of NuvoMedia unveiled his company's paperback-size, 22-ounce \$499 electronic Rocket eBook at Barnes & Noble, the bookstore and publishing company that will make titles available for downloading onto a personal computer. Books will sell for \$18 to \$25, and downloading of a book will take 2 to 5 minutes. Tapping a button will allow the reader to scroll through the book, which will include a built-in dictionary and allow electronic underlining, note-taking, word search, and font changes. Generally similar products are being developed by other manufacturers, including SoftBook Press and Everybook Inc. (AP 23 Oct 98)

NEC CHAIRMAN TAKES RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCANDAL AND RESIGNS

Tadahiro Sekimoto, the 71-year-old chairman of NEC, the world's second-largest manufacturer of computer chips, has resigned because of NEC's involvement in a scheme to overcharge the Japanese military on procurement contracts. Although Mr. Sekimoto was not personally linked to the scandal, it is Japanese practice to demand the resignation of senior executives when the companies they run have sinned. (New York Times 24 Oct 98)

MIKE ROBERTS CHOSEN AS INTERIM HEAD OF ICANN

Mike Roberts, who recently retired as vice president of Educom (the nonprofit organization that merged with CAUSE to form EDUCAUSE), has been selected as interim president and chief executive officer of ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers). ICANN is the new California-based nonprofit corporation that will assume primary responsibility for administering Internet address assignments. Roberts, who says he will not serve as president beyond the group's organizing stage, was a co-founder of CAUSE, the first director of Internet 2, and the first executive director of the Internet Society. The interim chairperson of ICANN will be Esther Dyson, who is a well-known figure in information technology. (AP 27 Oct 98)

MICROSOFT CHARGES NETSCAPE AND JUSTICE DEPARTMENT OF "SETUP"

In the Microsoft antitrust trial, Microsoft has accused Netscape of setting up a June 1995 meeting between executives of the two companies "for the express purpose of manufacturing evidence against Microsoft." With Netscape president James Barksdale in the witness stand, Microsoft attorney John L. Warden asked: "Isn't it a fact, Mr. Barksdale, that the June 21, 1995 meeting was held for the purpose of creating something that could be called a record that could be delivered to the Department of

Justice to spur them on to action against Microsoft?" Barksdale's answer: "That's absurd." (Washington Post 27 Oct 98)

IBM HOTMEDIA TACKLES ONLINE ADVERTISING

IBM's HotMedia software enables Web site operators to create ads with a variety of special and interactive effects -- including audio, video, zoom and panoramic views -- without the delays normally associated with downloading rich graphical formats. "The future of e-business depends on making the user experience as natural as possible," says IBM's VP for Internet media. "This is a set of tools to add rich media for commerce and advertising in a way that is completely transparent and painless." The technology works by delivering the packets of data that make up an interactive ad on a piecemeal basis and then reassembling them, rather than trying to push the entire format through at once. (Wall Street Journal 27 Oct 98)

UNIX NEWS FROM SUN, IBM, SEQUENT, AND SCO

Microsoft's year-long delay in bringing to market the newest version of its Windows NT operating system has provided a window of opportunity for Sun to introduce Solaris 7, the 64-bit-addressable and latest version of Sun's version of the Unix operating system. Solaris runs on the Sun Sparc microprocessor and on Intel-based servers. Sun executive Ed Zandler is claiming a three-year lead on Microsoft, and suggesting that the leaner Solaris (with only 12 to 13 million lines of code) will make it more stable than Windows NT, which is reported to have more than 35 million lines of code. In other developments, IBM, Sequent and the Santa Cruz Organization have agreed to develop a single Unix-based operating system that will run on both Intel and IBM microprocessors. (New York Times 27 Oct 98)

INTEL TOUTS "E-HEALTH"

Intel plans to jump-start Web-based consumer health services by investing in about a dozen companies that use the Internet to manage chronically ill patients, sell vitamins and baby supplies, and distribute health-related information to consumers. "It's one area that touches the lives of virtually everyone, and at the same time it's underrepresented on the Net," says Intel VP Steven McGeady. "Consumers are champing at the bit to get access to health information and services online." McGeady points out that the cost savings from eliminating unnecessary doctor's visits would be enough to cover the cost of a PC for every patient. "Everybody in this country knows the phrase 'e-commerce,' but nobody knows the phrase 'e-health.'" (Los Angeles Times 26 Oct 98)

GROUP STRIVES TO SET E-BOOK STANDARDS

A group of publishers, software makers and electronics manufacturers have pledged to work together to set technical standards for electronic books. Among the supporters of the standards are Microsoft, SoftBook Press, Bertelsmann, HarperCollins Publishers, Penguin Putnam, Simon & Schuster,

and Time-Warner Books. The standards are based on HTML and XML coding systems. Publishers are attracted to the e-book, both because of the savings on printing and distribution costs, but also because they could include more illustrations, charts and even raw data -- material that might be excluded now to save on printing costs. "Publishers could present vast quantities of data without loss of trees or muscle strain for our readers," says the director of online publishing for McGraw-Hill. On the other hand, publishers still have reservations regarding the security of the technology and fear that e-books will provide a new channel for copyright violations and intellectual property piracy. (Chronicle of Higher Education 30 Oct 98)

VIRTUAL COMPONENTS EXCHANGE

The Virtual Components Exchange is a consortium of companies organized by a Scottish economic development group, formed to provide a forum for buying and selling semiconductor chip designs. The idea behind this virtual shopping mall for chip intellectual property is that one day chips might be assembled using parts ordered one by one from an online catalogue, and then plugged into highly integrated chips, building-block style. Such an exchange of technology could usher in the era of the "system on a chip" -- a long-sought goal of chipmakers. "The trends tell us that in five years, you could see billions of dollars" in licensing transactions on such an exchange, says the senior VP of market development at Cadence Design Systems. (Wall Street Journal 26 Oct 98)

COMPLAINTS ABOUT AMERICA ONLINE IN TWO NEW ENGLAND STATES

Some new AOL subscribers in New Hampshire and Maine have found that local calls to connect to that service were routed to a long-distance number and resulted in unexpected long-distance bills. AOL claims that phone companies have been misrouting the calls, but that assertion is disputed by an executive of the Maine Public Utilities Commission, who says: "It's not the phone company. It's solely AOL, their installation disk. It has access to AOL's database of numbers ... but it's not dialing the right one." (AP 26 Oct 98)

WESTERN DIGITAL DEBUTS 13-GIGABYTE DRIVE

Western Digital Corp. is taking the wraps off its newest hard drive -- a magnetoresistive-based drive that holds 13 gigabytes of data. The drives also come equipped with new technology that automatically detects, isolates and repairs possible problem areas on the hard drive. The 13-gigabyte drive, part of Western Digital's Caviar line, is due out in mid-November, priced at about \$339. (Los Angeles Times 26 Oct 98)

FCC MAY CHANGE THE RULES ON INTERNET CALLS

The Federal Communications Commission is leaning toward a decision that would make telephone connections between PCs and Internet service providers more like long distance calls, and therefore subject to the agency's jurisdiction. If a majority of the commission's five members opt

for this approach, the "reciprocal compensation" agreements between the regional Bell companies and new local carriers serving ISPs will expire or be greatly reduced. Under the current arrangement, companies must pay each other a small fee for completing the local calls of each other's customers, but not for long distance calls. New carriers have turned these arrangements to their advantage by serving the modem banks of ISPs, which receive thousands of calls but never make any. "The current reciprocal compensation gravy train is running out of track," says an industry analyst with Legg Mason Precursor Group. "This may come as a surprise to some people, but they were in denial." (Reuters 29 Oct 98)

FASTEST COMPUTER KEEPS SPEEDING BY

The U.S. Department of Energy now has at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in California an IBM-built supercomputer claimed to be the fastest in the world, capable of a peak performance of 3.88 trillion calculations (or teraflops) a second and employing 5,800 processor chips connected in a "massively parallel" architecture. Energy Department officials hope to have a 10-teraflop IBM system running at Livermore by 2000 and a 100-teraflop computer by 2004. (New York Times 28 Oct 98)

APPLE MAKES \$30 A MONTH iMAC OFFER

In a challenge to Gateway's \$49.95-a-month Your:)Ware PC leasing program, Apple Computer says it will offer its popular iMac machine to customers for \$29.95 a month. The company hasn't said whether the new arrangement, which will debut Nov. 2, is a lease or a loan program, but by lowering the initial cost, the company hopes to lure new users to its line of products. Apple has sold 278,000 iMacs, with almost a third going to first-time buyers. (Investor's Business Daily 29 Oct 98)

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE MICROSOFT TRIAL

Microsoft's lead attorney has accused America Online and Netscape of engaging in the same kind of conduct the government calls illegal and abusive if Microsoft did it (and that, of course, is what the government is hoping to prove). The attorney, John L. Warden, produced a message written by AOL chief executive Steve Case summarizing a meeting with Netscape executives and saying that Netscape "states unequivocally that there are no plans for interest in entering the online services business and/or related businesses such as Internet access. Netscape agrees that it will not enter these businesses for a minimum of 3 years following the completion of the licensing agreement with AOL." Warden used the message to show that Microsoft's two rivals were trying to "divide the market." Outside the courtroom, government attorney David Boies said that the discussions between AOL and Netscape were irrelevant to the charges against Microsoft, because "neither Netscape or America Online approached the market share or the market dominance of Microsoft." (Washington Post 29 Oct 98)

POINTCAST UNVEILS ONLINE SHOPPING SERVICE

PointCast, which was one of the first companies to pioneer "push" technology that automatically delivers information to a user's desktop, is opening an electronic-commerce shopping service called MarketPlace. The MarketPlace Web site, which will offer links to computer hardware, books and other merchandise, will be sponsored by Visa. (Bloomberg News/Los Angeles Times 29 Oct 98)

UNIX GROWTH STILL OUTPACES NT

A recent Dataquest survey shows that Unix growth is accelerating and outpacing that of its main competitor, Windows NT. Unix market share has grown from 36% in 1996 to 42.7% in the second quarter of this year. The NT market has increased from 9.7% to 16.2% during the same time period. "NT is far behind where the state of the art is, and it has a long way to go," says a Dataquest analyst. Meanwhile, Sun's recent program to offer its Solaris 7.0 operating system free to developers and educational institutions is also making inroads in the server software market. "Where the Solaris giveaway will eat up market share is Windows and NT on PCs," says the group marketing manager for Solaris. Sun is also reinforcing the Linux system by licensing its source code for the Java Development and Compatibility Kits. "That's a good combo, Linux and Java," says a former SunSoft programmer who's now working on a Linux port. "They both cater to quick, more simple types of applications. Getting Java on Linux is one of the items I've felt Linux needs to make into the enterprise." (TechWeb 29 Oct 98)

STOCK FRAUD ON THE NET

The Securities and Exchange Commission has filed 23 enforcement actions against 44 individuals and companies who used Internet junk mail, online newsletters, message board postings and Web sites to illegally tout stocks. The individuals charged with fraud for allegedly lying about the companies they touted or their independence from those companies. (USA Today 29 Oct 98)

COURT REJECTS ATTEMPT TO BLOCK RECORDING DEVICE

Federal District Judge Audrey B. Collins of Los Angeles has denied a request by the recording industry to stop production of a 2.4-ounce \$188 handheld recording device called Rio, which can record and play back digital music found on the Internet. The industry is concerned that the recorder will encourage widespread piracy, and that manufacturers of such devices "have a moral obligation to protect creative works." But a lawyer for Diamond Multimedia Systems, the company that makes Rio, asks: "Are they saying no one can develop a new technology without their permission?" (New York Times 28 Oct 98)

NEW!

Bits & Bytes

by R. F. Mariano

As fate would have it. We lost the bottom end in the starboard engine. So.... Bits & Bytes is in the shop to have that motor pulled and rebuilt. We are looking at about two to three weeks down time. I know I am in good hands a Pablo Creek Marina. The boat's indoors while the engine work is being done. We are looking at low to mid five figures... whew.... anyone out there feeling flush? All donations will be greatly appreciated. The Bits & Bytes will be used for a number of duties including showing the wonders of the inland Florida waters to the underprivileged children in the ne Florida area. Hopefully, it will instill a desire to succeed and avoid a lifetime of failures and hardship. The boat is of an extremely sound hull and superstructure it has the very best of electronics installed. We are so close to full launch. The engine problems evidenced themselves during the second set of shakedown tests.

[PICTURE] Catching BIG Trout

To begin with, pretend to fish for reds, but we would really be fishing for trout--big trout. This idea was born out of a series of articles in recent outdoor publications that described various not-so-well-known approaches to catching large seatrout in Florida waters. The reason for the apparent flood of seatrout articles is a statewide resurgence of trout populations as a result of much stronger commercial and recreational fishing regulations going into place the past few years. More seatrout means more big trout. "It seems that the best way to catch big trout is to fish for reds or snook, for Florida that leaves only reds."

Apparently "gator" trout don't hang around the same places as the younger fish most of us pursue so diligently on the grass flats every summer. Instead, large seatrout lead a more solitary lifestyle, preferring areas more often associated with reds such as oyster bars, creek mouths and the shallows along the marsh-covered shoreline. So with a flats boat to improve our "stealth" factor, and since we would be fishing in less than two feet of water, we set out to test this theory. After all, the least that could happen is a few reds wind up being caught.

We began by fishing topwater plugs around oyster bars in Ft. George River and Simpson's Creek. When that failed we began fishing along the marshy shoreline of Little Talbot Island, concentrating our efforts on sections of the shoreline that sloped away into deeper water. We took turns paddling and casting gold spoons next to the marshgrass and reeling them slowly down the sloping bottom. It's a time-tested method for catching reds, and it worked. Within 10 minutes, five of which was spent tugging on a fish, I had landed a five-pound trout. John followed that a few minutes later with a slightly smaller red. Spring and fall are the best times of the year to catch one or more of these big trout in NE Florida. That's also when it's more likely to catch reds and trout in the same space or, thereabouts. Look for areas where there is deep water, four-to-six feet, or more, near oyster bars or the shoreline. With the rising tide, trout will move into the shallows to forage for small baitfish that normally rely on the shallow water for protection from

predators. When done feeding the larger fish will return to near-by deeper water until the urge strikes again. "Sometimes they feed for an hour, sometimes less, but if you fish through most of the rising tide you'll be there when they show."

The same applies for oyster bars where the gamefish will roam over the newly-covered bars just long enough for a good meal. The trick is to be there when they come out of their "comfort zones" for food. Fishing in shallow, clear water presents many other problems. "The fish are very nervous and will quit feeding at the slightest disturbance." Its recommended to keep your boat as far away from your target as possible. When wading, keep a low profile and cast sidearm when you're close to the fish. When fishing oyster bars, wade from bar to bar, fishing 360 degrees around each one. Live bait is another way to zero in on large seatrout. Use large pinfish or finger mullet at least six inches long. As seatrout grow larger, they get slower because the amount of water they have to push out of their way. As a result they seek baitfish that are also relatively large and slow. Of course, even a small trout will grab a large bait, but if you're catching small trout you're fishing in the wrong place anyway. Use a popping cork to keep the bait from hiding and/or snagging on the bottom, and a splitshot or two to slow it down even more. The same applies to fishing with artificials: work topwater plugs very slowly, and gold spoons just fast enough to make them wobble. The final ingredient you'll need is patience. You're simply not going to catch as many fish, but the fun of catching even one or two "gators" is worth all the hours of casting. Believe me.

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The Linux Advocate

Column #25
October 30th, 1998
by Scott Dowdle
dowdle@icstech.net
ICQ UIN: 15509440

LOGIN:

Wow, it's been a very busy week at work. I wonder how that Microsoft trial is going? This past weekend was the Atlanta Linux Showcase show. From what I've read about it, it had record turn outs... too bad I couldn't attend. There's always next year. I did find some decent coverage of the ALS and included it as a spotlight. Also, a friend of mine submitted a spotlight that talks about installing Linux over the Internet. Let's see you do THAT with Windows 2000.

At the ALS, one of the keynote speakers was a fellow from Corel. He happened to mention that Corel has decided to give away WordPerfect 8 for Linux for personal use... which will be available online sometime next week. There are quite a few other juicy tidbits that Corel announced but I'm saving that for next week. Be sure and get signed up with Corel so you can download WordPerfect 8 when it comes out. <http://linux.corel.com>

NEWS:

Item #1: The future of computing starts with an L - One columnist from ZDNET details her experience at the Atlanta Linux Showcase. Although she spells GNOME as GENOME, I'll forgive her. She points out that Linux is a better solution to the industries problems than, you know... that other thing. Check out the following URL:
<http://www.zdnet.com/pcweek/stories/columns/0,4351,364470,00.html>

Item #2: Mozilla for X moves from Motif to GTK - All I can say is wow. Jamie Z. at Netscape was quoted in an interview on theme.org a few months ago as saying that Motif was the only way to go on Unix because it was the standard: I guess standards are changing. Since the goal of Mozilla is to offer an open source browser, they finally decided to go with an open source GUI API. I think this is a big push for GTK, which as you will remember was originally created by the GIMP developers. GTK has come a long way since then though. To read more about the development roadmap for Mozilla visit the following URL. You can search for gtk in the page if you want to see that part.
<http://www.mozilla.org/roadmap.html>

Item #3: Stuart Anderson on the Linux Standard Base Project - The head of the LSB gave a talk recently and the following URL contains a transcript. I think it is very important to watch what's going on with this Linux distribution standardizing effort. After it is concluded, there shouldn't be any disparity between Linux distributions, which is something that third party software makers are concerned about. Check it out at the following URL: <http://www.flux.org/linux/lsb.html>

Item #4: Unix gaining in NT rivalry - Who'da thunk it? The backlash against Windows NT is finally noticeable. Well, in all fairness, Windows NT is still growing but Unix is gaining more in marketshare. This just goes to show that the death of Unix was announced prematurely. Enjoy the following URL:
<http://www.mercurycenter.com/business/center/unix102798.htm>

Item #5: Linux inventor assesses future of open-source software - Yet another interview with Linus. Find it at the following URL:
<http://www.eetimes.com/story/OEG19981027S0007>

Item #6: Mexico's Project Scholar Net adopts Linux - The Mexican school systems seem to have decided to adopt Linux in a big way and will be installing Linux at various schools starting soon and continuing over the next five years. The estimated number of Linux machines in the school systems of Mexico at the completion of Project Scholar is 140,000. Not too shabby, eh? Check it out at the following URL:
<http://www.gnome.org/mailling-lists/archives/gnome-list/1998-October/1298.html>

Item #7: Oracle firms stance on Linux - Although Linux is legendary for its technical quality, the Linux community is also very well known for its support system. InfoWorld Magazine gave the Linux Community the Best of Technical support award last year but you'd think the industry press never heard about it. In his opening speech at the Atlanta Linux Showcase this past weekend, Allen Miner, vice president of strategic business development for Oracle said that the tech support from Red Hat, SuSE and Caldera is faster and better than Oracle's own. He also said that Oracle wants to learn from the Linux model and hopefully achieve the level of customer satisfaction the Linux community enjoys. Good luck. Read the full article at the following URL:
<http://www.infoworld.com/cgi-bin/displayStory.pl?981023.whoracle.htm>

Item #8: Open Response to Microsoft France - I don't know if anyone noticed, but I made a brief reference to the General Manager of Microsoft France and a FUD campaign against Linux somewhere in the last column. I didn't cover it in a news item last week because the URL in question was all in French and, for one thing, I don't speak French. Anyway, there have been several responses to the Microsoft France GM and the following URL is the funniest one I've seen so far. Be warned, it does contain a few racy words. It can be found at the following URL:
<http://www.zork.net/suite.html>

SPOTLIGHT: Atlanta Linux Showcase 1998 - As mentioned in the Login section above, the ALS was this past weekend. Below are two URLs for great coverage of the show. I did get the permission of one ALS vendor to reproduce his account of the show which follows. Enjoy.
<http://slashdot.org/articles/98/10/26/1449214.shtml>
<http://www.warren-wilson.edu/~mdemma/linuxexpo/>

--- begin long quote here ---

Brief report on:

Atlanta Linux Showcase
by Eric Lee Green

Sunday - Oct 25th, 1998

Now that I'm back from Atlanta... All in all, a successful show. The "nerd" factor was low at this one. At LinuxExpo there were all these hacker types walking around who would talk your head off about the technical details of your product but who would never buy it in a thousand years. There were real people at ALS -- people with money. System administrators. Technical directors. Company presidents. Consultants. We were approached by people wanting some big-time Linux systems -- a guy who needs to support 250 simultaneous telnet users while running the Progress database, for example (No problem, with the ICP-Vortex 5-channel RAID controller and enough Seagate Cheetah hard

drives we can get him all the disk bandwidth the PCI bus is capable of passing), and a university researcher ("I have a grant, but not enough for an SGI") who wanted the absolute highest-performance Linux system he could get, 2gb of system RAM, etc. I also found the answer to another question there. There was a guy who needed 45 megabytes per second throughput for a video application. He sent me email last week asking if I had any ideas. I had to admit that the fastest I'd managed was 28 megabytes per second sustained throughput in a multi-channel RAID setup. Well, some researchers in Wisconsin have released a distributed fiber-channel disk filesystem with drivers for Linux. One of their guys came by our booth, talking about it, and I mentioned my problem. He said "45 megabytes per second? No problem!". He left me the literature for all the stuff involved -- Fiber-Channel disk drives, interface cards, etc.

A Motorola rep approached me, wanting to sell us some Power PC motherboards in ATX form factor to run Linux. I told him I couldn't see the market, we sell lots of Alphas to research labs and etc. that need power and they're not going to buy a slightly-slower PowerPC to do their molecular modeling etc., but I told him I'd give his card to our marketing guys to see what they can come up with. I think I'm going to call him Monday anyhow just to get the technical goodies on it :-). (What can I say, I may know a bit about marketing but I'm a tech nerd at heart).

By far the most impressive product, though, was hardware-accelerated OpenGL running under Linux. Thomas Rouell of Xi Graphics came by our booth on Thursday, prior to the show opening, and asked if he could install the demo on one of our machines. I asked my boss and he said sure, so we popped the cover on a low-end RAID server (this one had a PII-400, 128MB of RAM, a single-channel RAID controller and three hot-swappable 9gb Cheetah hard drives), replaced the piece of junk S3 video card (hey, it's a server, it's gonna sit in a back room somewhere and gather dust) with a Number Nine Revolution 4 with 32mb of SDRAM (these things go around \$200-\$300, i.e., we're not talking Elsa Gloria territory), and then... then he started up four simultaneous OpenGL demos, each running in its own window, each running at speeds similar to an SGI of three years ago (alas, even AGP framerates can't keep up with current SGI hardware). Combined with the 600Mhz Alpha next to it that was running Mandelbrots in real time, this was a real show-stopper. People were always stopping and saying "Wow! Is this a dual-processor Xeon?" and I had to say no, it was the video card doing the work, the processor was just a plain old PII-400. I asked Thomas what the framerate for Quake was on this thing. I forget what he told me, but he also told me it was faster than with that same video card under Windows 95 and OpenGL only works in full-screen mode under Windows 95! I.e., rendering into a window (even a window expanded to the full size of the screen, with windows on top of it!) we can get faster rendering than Win95 in full-screen mode. To say that I was impressed is to understate it.

Our booth was right across from Metro-Link's booth (Xi Graphic's big competitor in the Linux video market). One of their programmers had the "C" source to their own accelerated OpenGL open on a window, trying to make it work. They kept glancing over at our booth and I overheard one of them tell one of their programmers (who was in the booth) "Hurry up, hurry up, get it working, we gotta show ours too!". Alas, their hardware-accelerated OpenGL kept crashing every time they tried to double-buffer, but they promised "Give us two weeks and we'll blow their doors off." Ain't it great? A Microsoft guy came wandering by our booth, looked at the Mandelbrots running in real time, looked at three

simultaneous OpenGL demos running in separate windows in real time, and shook his head. "What's this?" he asked. I said "Hardware accelerated OpenGL. Impressive, isn't it?" He clicked on the "Start" menu (the system was running the FVWM95 window manager, which looks similar to Windows 95) and the Linux "Start" menu came up, and he shook his head again. "This is Linux? I didn't know it was going to be like this," he said. I asked "What do you mean?" He said "All these windows and graphics and everything. When they said Linux was a Unix clone, I came in here expecting to see a bunch of dumb terminals." I don't think so, Toto.
<smile>

-- Eric

--- end long quote here ---

SPOTLIGHT: Installing a Linux distribution over the Internet

A friend of mine recently moved from Billings to Missoula, Montana in order to start college. He moved into the dorms and it just so happens that each dorm room has a 10BaseT Ethernet network connector for Internet access (which includes access to the campus network via SMB). Having a high speed connection opens up many new possibilities and Peter talks about doing a network install of the SuSE Linux distribution. All this entails is downloading an file and making an install floppy disk out of it, booting from that disk and answering a few questions. Being able to install over the network means that when the install program asks what media do you want to install from, rather than picking CD-ROM, or local hard drive partition, you pick an FTP site on the Internet from which the install program will access all of the files it needs to do the install. This is very cool, trust me, I've done an install on my laptop over my home LAN. What follows is Peter's write up. Thanks for the submission Peter!

--- begin long quote here ---

Installing SuSE Linux over the Internet
by Peter Schmiedeskamp
email: peter@dabel003b.aber.unt.edu

Yeah, I know. Yet another product review of yet another Linux distribution. The goal of this article is to be slightly off the beaten path by reviewing a network install of the new S.u.S.E. Linux version 5.3. As a student with a newly found high speed internet connection, Linux becomes a very viable option when compared with many operating systems that rarely see revisions and are solely distributed on CD-ROM. Several students I have met are amazed that they don't need to put in a Windows 98 CD and go through an agony comparable to the dentist's office to get a good solid system. With S.u.S.E. I really found it to be as easy as putting in a disk (created by the old standard rawwrite utility or some linux equivalent like "cat eide01 > /dev/fd0") and I was off and running.

The notion that Microsoft supporters spread that Linux is difficult to install is laughable with the advent of installers like the one contained in S.u.S.E. One would have to be brain dead to not be able to reason through this simple install process. I started my installation on the hardest of all Intel-compatible hardware: A laptop with a PCMCIA ethernet

card. It goes without saying that the average linux installation is going to work smoothly on most desktop systems (On a side note, the desktop from which I'm typing this installed swimmingly as well). Laptop computers tend to separate the real operating systems from the mediocre. My Pentium 233 MMX complied without the slightest hesitation. I loaded from the "Kernel Modules" section the PCMCIA support. That was all I had to do. My 3Com card was no longer an issue. This was, in fact, easier than my desktop where I had to (Gasp!) select the type of network card. For those who regularly spend time on the net hunting for that elusive driver for Windows, you have no idea the satisfaction of having everything "right there."

From this point it was a matter of telling S.u.S.E. to do an FTP install and punch in my IP address and the other various numbers that the University gave me. Assuming you know all of this information, this is cake. One caveat: when selecting an FTP site, S.u.S.E. asks for an IP of a server. You can enter a real hostname instead. I used `ftp.suse.org/pub/SuSE-Linux/5.3/suse/`. After pausing to bask in the glory of an easy kill I continued onward. The next stage of the install involved the typically daunting task of partitioning the hard disk. For the linux new-comer, the typical response is, "What the hell is disk partitioning?" S.u.S.E. does a nice job of giving a small crash course in partitioning (provided the novice is literate and is willing to actually read the concise online help). Disk partitioning is often a tricky issue even to the experienced user. Frequently partitioning becomes a guessing game as to how much space should be allocated and where it should be allocated to. Unfortunately this is how it is. Linux uses a much more robust way of doing things than Windows and it is simply necessary to spend the time to learn what it is and do it right. S.u.S.E. did the best thing it could possibly do and created a clear layout of a partitioning utility that is far easier than RedHat's much acclaimed "Disk Druid" software.

Following partitioning the drive(s), the user is faced with what software to install. There are a number of configurations that are pre-defined. I rarely use these as they always seem to include some software that I know I'll never use. In RedHat installations I'm often afraid to play with much of this because I always manage to break something. In S.u.S.E. I found that it detected discrepancies in package requirements that I've blundered into in the past with other distributions. Time to kick back and relax! Unlike some other operating systems, (i.e. Windows) Linux does not need to be baby sat. O.K. I could never leave a freshly installing linux system either. I'm too much of an addict to not play around in the other consoles by pressing Alt-F1-8. One thing I noticed in S.u.S.E. was that during an install, I was able to use utilities such as telnet. For those of you who regularly use a remote shell, this feature is really fun. I used the time that my system spent installing to check e-mail.

Unlike many distributions, I feel that S.u.S.E. lives up to the ease of it's installation. Administration is a snap. It is called "YaST." Simply type "yast" at the command prompt and you are up and running. This is the same interface that is used during installation, so the user should already feel somewhat at home with the menus. From here you can configure everything from your network devices to X.

On a whole, I have to say that S.u.S.E. is very, very impressive. With an easy-to-use bundle like the Linux Office Suite, S.u.S.E. Linux is in a position to nip some market share from the big players. I expect that as people discover the simplicity of S.u.S.E. it will win more and more

converts. As the S.u.S.E. people are fond of saying, "Have a lot of fun!"

--- end long quote here ---

LOGOUT:

I hope you enjoyed this edition of LA. Remember, if you have any questions or comments, please.. send me some email.

Scott Dowdle

Happy Halloween!!
Halloween in Jacksonville Florida 1998....

Trick or Treat!!

The classy costumes and the numbers of parents escorting the youngsters was wonderful. What made it all even better was the costumes the parents and grandparents were wearing.

[PICTURE]

Some of the getups were absolutely stunning with originality and creativity.

[PICTURE]

Four Pounds of Bach's Candies later.... and all was quiet again... I hope these youngsters and grandparent had as much fun as I did.

[PICTURE]

Magic Boo??

[PICTURE]

Hey Taylor? Who did the "make-up" job???
Its pretty good! You DO look like a DEAD Rollerblader! Nice job.

Special Notice!! STR Infofile File format for Articles

File Format for STReport

All articles submitted to STReport for publication must be sent in the following format. Please use the format requested. Any files received that do not conform will not be used. The article must be in an importable word processor format for Word 6.0 and/or Word Perfect 7:. The margins are .05" left and 1.0" Monospaced fonts are not to be used. Please use proportional fonting only and at Twelve (12) points.

No Indenting on any paragraphs!!

No Indenting of any lines or "special gimmicks"

No underlining!

Columns shall be achieved through the use of tabs only. Or, columns in Word or Word Perfect format.

Do NOT, under any circumstances, use the space bar.

MS Word is Preferred.

Most of all:. PLEASE! No ASCII "ART"!!

There is no limits as to size, articles may be split into two if lengthy

Actual Artwork should be in GIF, PCX, JPG, TIF, BMP, WMF file formats

Artwork (pictures, graphs, charts, etc.)should be sent along with the article separately

Please use a single font in an article. TTF Times New Roman is preferred. (VERY Strong Hint)

If there are any questions please use either E-Mail or call.

Many grateful thanks in advance for your enthusiastic co-operation and input.

Ralph F. Mariano, Editor
rmariano@streport.com

ST Report International Online Magazine

STR Editor's Mail Call "... a place for the readers to be heard"

Editor's MailBag
Messages * NOT EDITED * for content

From: Larry Reagan pastorlr@aeneas.net
Sent: Thursday, October 29, 1998 11:20 PM
To: rmariano@streport.com
Subject: a different opinion

In my honest opinion, Democrats & Republicans, are more interested in their own personal fame, wealth, and power, than in honestly leading our country. There may be a very few who have some integrity. The Democratic party platform is a shame. The Republicans butter up to conservative thinking people, and Christians, to get their vote. Then, they do as they please. Democrats believe in big gov't that grows at a rate of 5% per year. Republicans believe in big gov't that grows at a rate of 3% per year.

Bottom Line: They like the power that our money gives them. It amazes me

how any honest thinking person could really believe either party really cares about what is really right. The proof is in the pudding. We work until the middle of May to give them money to operate on. Then, the rest of the year to feed our families and provide for them. I'm sick of hypocritical gov't.

The only real hope for honest gov't is Jesus Christ. He will sit on an earthly throne someday. Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus. I wonder if you've ever read the entire story of His life. Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John.

Sincerely,

Larry Reagan

Thanks for the inspirational encouragement. At one point in my life I had plans of entering the Clergy as a teaching Brother. I hope the rest of our readers turn out to vote. This is a very serious election coming up. God help us all if the Republicans gain a majority in both houses. The little guys out there will be dead.

Classics & Gaming Section
Editor Dana P. Jacobson
dpj@streport.com

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> From the Atari Editor's Desk  
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"Saying it like it is!"

Is it already the end of October? Wow! Halloween is tomorrow night; I enjoy this holiday more than ever now that I'm out in the 'burbs! Seeing all of the kids in costume is really a treat (no pun intended); it's something I really didn't have when living in the city. Our house is lightly decorated for the festivities and we're almost ready for the hordes of little ghosts and goblins that will be dropping by. A terrific holiday here during a fun season of the year. Please, drive carefully on Halloween night - the streets will be full of trick-or-treaters and may not be as visible to you because of their costumes.

I don't have much to say this week, so I'll move right into this week's issue and then finish up my scary preparations for Saturday night!

Until next time...

Welcome to your channel Atari Member Update.

1. New MyMail update
2. A MP3-player/decoder for Falcon030.
3. Alexander Clauss Homepage
4. Webpages made by me

1. M Y M A I L U P D A T E

MyMail by Erik Hall is now up to v0.70 and he is asking for more beta-testers for MyMail.

Here's the news and bug fixes since the last version:
info sent from him:

- Fixed problems with decoding of base64 encoded attachmens from SUN mailer.
- It was not possible to close "Edit Address card" cause of bad return value for a function.
This is now done correctly.
- Problem with popup menu opened outside the top of screen is now fixed.
- Added sound functions.
MyMAIL is NOT doing the playback; it is only sending a va-start message so it works if there is a soundplayer installed correctly on the computer.
- New setup added for sound events.
If gemjing is used do select the button "Use GEMJing"
- Now settings are saved directly at change and the save settings icon are removed.
- Rewrite of setting window handler.
- Prev/next buttons in editor caused mymail to crash caused by a NULL pointer.
- Internal ram buffert for clipboard is now dynamicly allocated.
- Fixed problems with mail from outlook express coding filenames in base64; these filenames are now decoded correctly.
As usual this is violating the specifications so mymail only decode this and will never encode in this format.
- Bug in call to file selector in save mail as text or html was randomly causing mymail to crasch.
- One memory release error fixed.
- Now mymail is telling the user the if the mail server refuse to accept a mailaddress when sending a mail but not if it is to a mailing list where the error addresses is saved in the file FAILED.TXT.
This is a must cause of some servers checks if it is a "real" address by contacting the destination server.
If the server is down then it is not possible to send mail to that address.

This is not any fault in mymail this is only a way for providers to protect them from being used as "Spam" server.

- A bug in the logging of mail was causing the log to be closed and re-opened many times in a mail send and this was slowing down the transmit of the mail.
- A small speed optimization is done in the base64(mime) encoding.
- Some spelling errors fixed in dialogs.
- Empty text in mail was some times causing mymail to bomb this is now fixed.
- Faulty pointer in "Depack" window was causing problems.

- This is now fixed.
- CTRL-V was causing mymail to hang randomly
this is now fixed.
 - Faster encoding of fileattachments (base64)
 - Some times text after links was not displayed
this is now fixed.
 - At export of mail to html format the links inside a mail
is converted into a selectable link.
 - Now the keys Shift-upp arrow/Shift down arrow is now supported by
mymail to scroll pages up and down.
 - Fixed a bug causing problems when there was more mail in a mailbox
than mymail could handle. The limit was 512 but is now increased to
1024 but the program do not crash if there is more mail.

My MyMail support page is to be found at:

<http://home.bip.net/atari/mymail/>

and the official webpage, made by the author:

<http://www2.tripnet.se/~erikhall/programs/mymail.html>

2. A M P 3 - P L A Y E R F O R F A L C O N ?

The authors behind MPEG Audio Layer II PRG/ACC Realtime DSP Decoder, Fredrik Noring and Tomas Berndtsson have now started to continue work with their MP2-player from dec 1996.

After a discussion with them Ive been told that they might try to compile a MP3-decoder, just, might. I told them that if theres someone who can try to make a mp3-player for Falcon in near future, they can.

There's a pre-beta alpha version out of their mp2-player to download from this path:

http://home.bip.net/atari/apps/mp2_099a-19981016.lzh

This is the version 0.99 release of the MPEG Audio Layer II decoder

You can find info and more about this app and their developments at following URLs:

<http://www.noring.org/mp2/>

Fredrik Noring:

<http://www.lysator.liu.se/~noring/DSP.html>

Tomas Berndtsson:

<http://tomas.nocrew.org/DSP/DSP-main.html>

Ive also been told that if theres a wide interest of a mp3-player/decoder they might give it a chance. You have to mail them at the following address and give the your own opinion about this:

tomas@nocrew.org

They also have started to use the Falcon MP3 mailing list. If you want to became a member of this list, just mail them at the address above

and tell them that you are interested to follow the development of a MP3-player for Falcon. This list uses the address nocrew-mp3@nocrew.org.

Do something good for the Atari market, mail them and encourage them to start writing a MP3-player/decoder. The whole Internet is full of the MP3-files and this is growing popular every month. We need a player for our machines too.

3. A L E X A N D E R C L A U S S H O M E P A G E

The author of CAB, Alexander Clauss has moved his homepage to a new location.

<http://www.tu-darmstadt.de/~aclauss/>

His new e-mailaddress is:

aclauss@hrzpub.tu-darmstadt.de

4. W E B P A G E S M A D E B Y M Y S E L F

I have since the month of july constructed some pages related to the Swedish Atari Users Association SAK.

The Nordic Atari Show 1999 will be held here in Gotheburg next june. Info and more about this show, is available at:

<http://www.sak.nu/nas>

Theres also pictures to view taken by a webcamera from the show 1998 at there.

We have a own members magazine too, called Atarimagasinet. It is distributed to our members four times a year. If you can read the swedish language why dont you join us and receive this magazine? I now that theres lots of norwegian, danish and finnish that can cope with the language. After the close down of the norwegian Atari user group AOUN we invite the membrs to come and join us now.

The Atarimagsinet homepage is located at:

<http://www.sak.nu/am>

I also have made a starting point for our new members to discover the Net with several links, Atarirelated documents and more at:

<http://surf.to/sakmedlem>

Best Regards

Mille Babic
E-mail: atari@mail.bip.net
WWW: <http://home.bip.net/atari/>

>In This Week's Gaming Section - "Starship"!! "Soldier"!

settlers against Caine and his scientifically engineered squadron.

The game serves as an extension of the movie, where players assume the role of Todd or another of his First Generation comrades-at-arms who have been skilled in the use of all types of weapons and military equipment. This unit of elite soldiers scours the universe to protect the weak and root out all the remains of their Makers and their new breed of weapons, both human and technological.

''Soldier'' is a real-time, three-dimensional, level-based game. Each of the six levels is constructed of a series of 3D environments containing a number of missions and objectives that must be completed by using lightning-quick reflexes and a variety of weapons. Level objectives are diverse and include challenging tasks like saving hostages, freeing settlers, and defeating the formidable foes dispatched by the Makers. Victory can only be achieved through pure brawn tempered by intelligent, strategic game play.

''Soldier'' is being developed by Hollywood, California's Gigawatt Studios, creators of Men in Black: The Game and Pinky & The Brain World Conquest. Brothers David and Yoni Koenig are leading the team facing the challenge of bringing director Paul Anderson's and writer David Webb Peoples' vision to life.

''The movie is going to wow hard-core gamers with its ultra-cool environments - a bleak, wind-swept wasteland of a planet with mountains of industrial debris like transformers, spacecraft and outdated machinery,'' said Yoni Koenig, president of Gigawatt. ''We're going to take this brilliant artistic vision and extend it into six gaming environments that remain true to the film and give gamers ever-increasing levels of visual excitement.''

''But one of the most powerful themes in the movie is the power of redemption and the belief that, no matter how much a person may have been trained to disregard his emotions, we can always find the humanity deep within him,'' observed Gigawatt Chief Executive Officer David Koenig. '' ''Soldier'' will require gamers to be quite skilled in combat, but in order to succeed, they too will have to connect with their own humanity by protecting the weak and defenseless from tyranny.''

Star Trek Cousin Coming to TV

Mainframe Entertainment has begun pre-production efforts for a 3-D computer-animated series based upon Gene Roddenberry's ''Starship.''

The story is the last property by the creator of Star Trek that hasn't been produced for TV or film. Following three years of negotiations, the Vancouver-based animated television series producer acquired the rights to produce the Starship series in all media.

''This is one of the last unproduced Roddenberry properties or ideas,'' said Chris Brough, Mainframe's CEO and vice chairman. Brough said the Roddenberry Group selected Mainframe because the company's ideas were in accord with Roddenberry's philosophy and content.

The 3-D CGI-animated television series is molded after Roddenberry's vision of a vast starship built and launched to scientifically explore

the galaxy. Mainframe is initially gearing the series for prime-time television.

Mainframe has begun pre-production activities including animation tests, character modeling, and production design. The series will begin production in mid-1999.

Square Soft Launches Xenogears in North America

Square Soft, provider of one of the most successful gaming franchises in interactive entertainment history, today announced the launch of Xenogears for the PlayStation game console. Xenogears features traditional role-playing gameplay combined with exquisitely hand-drawn and computer-generated animation. An intricate storyline involving many human and non-human characters will prove to captivate audiences of all ages.

Following the release of Parasite Eve, Square Soft's critically acclaimed cinematic role playing game (RPG), Xenogears is the second of four new titles to be marketed and distributed in North America during 1998 under the recently-formed Square Electronic Arts joint venture between Square Soft and Electronic Arts.

Square Soft has once again proven themselves as a leader in role playing game (RPG) development with the release of Xenogears. Xenogears provides the elements that made Final FantasyVII popular, and adds original features such as giant fighting robot action, dramatic hand-drawn cell animation, and unique real-time battle systems. Players can rotate the amazingly detailed 3D gameplay maps 360 degrees, and have the ability to navigate around the environment by jumping and climbing. In battle, mega-robots can be controlled, adding great variety to play. A new real-time combat system eliminates restrictive menus, using button commands to provide fast-paced, intuitive action. Players can wield dramatic magical spells or engage in real-time polygonal robot vs. robot battles. Combined with dynamic camera angles and intense lighting effects, Xenogears is an experience that won't be forgotten.

'Square Soft knows RPGs,' stated Jun Iwasaki, president of Square Electronic Arts. 'Xenogears brings the best RPG development know-how and combines the utmost in current technological innovation to bring a new type of RPG to the gaming world. Our goal, as always, is to provide our customers with the highest quality gameplay experience available. Xenogears reinforces Square Soft's commitment to this goal.'

A gigantic colony ship is forced to evacuate immediately after it is invaded by a foreign organism. After leaving a greatly overpopulated home and becoming severely crippled with the destruction of its major operating system the ship plunges into a remote area by the name of Ignas when the captain activates the self-destruct sequence.

Upon Ignas' continent, a war has been raging between two countries for hundreds of years. In the north of the continent lies the Kislev Empire, in the south lies the desert kingdom of Aveh. The story begins in the remote village of Lahan, in the outskirts of Aveh, near the border with Kislev.

The new robots found by the Ethos institution and excavated by both

countries changed the way that combat was fought. What lies beyond is a story of intrigue, treachery, allies becoming enemies and enemies becoming allies. Fei Fong Wong, a marital artist extraordinaire, makes many remarkable discoveries along the way, challenging past doubts and resolving issues regarding his current mission.

Xenogears is a 2 disc RPG available for approximately US \$45.00 and carries an ESRB rating of ``Teen.'' It is available now in leading retail outlets throughout North America.

The Main Event in January is Contender - Only on the PlayStation

FOSTER CITY, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Oct. 26, 1998--Bringing pure fighting enjoyment to the videogame ring in January is Sony Computer Entertainment America's premiere boxing title, Contender(tm), available only for the PlayStation game console.

Contender offers head-to-head boxing action with arcade-style gameplay and control, and is compatible with the new Dual Shock(tm) Analog Controller.

``Combining crisp 3D polygonal graphics with fast and furious arcade boxing action, Contender is sure to appeal to a very broad range of gamers,'' said Peter Dille, senior director, product marketing, Sony Computer Entertainment America. ``This is one of those games that you can just pick-up and have a blast with. You don't need to know a ton about boxing appreciate the game. It's amazing how quickly the competitive juices get flowing when your are trying to knock your friend out.''

Contender features 40 different boxers, 20 playable characters, each with their own unique look, fighting style, strengths and weaknesses. When playing in the Single Player Main Event Mode the ultimate goal is to jab, punch and knock out competitors till you rank as World Champion of the boxing ring. With every fight, you can build your fighter's speed, strength and stamina. These fighters can be saved on to memory cards to fight against friends.

Contender includes ringside cheers from the crowd that grow louder with each progressing game, as well as realistic character reactions like twitching on the mat when lying unconscious, faces grimacing and eyes blinking when hit, and even facial bruises and black eyes after a brutal fighting match.

Utilizing a true boxing scoring system, it'll take proven boxing skills and mastery of the three different fight styles, including Detroit, Open and Peek-a-boo to outmaneuver each competitor and earn the ultimate title as boxing Champion of the World. A Super Punch can also be used, which has three times the power of a regular punch.

Cool Boarders 3 Shreds Onto the Playstation

FOSTER CITY, Calif.--(ENTERTAINMENT WIRE)--Oct. 27, 1998--989 Studios announced today the availability of Cool Boarders 3 for the PlayStation

game console.

Equipped with revolutionary graphics and unparalleled gameplay, Cool Boarders 3 is setting the standard for realism in snowboarding videogames by providing the look and feel of real snowboarding action.

''Cool Boarders 3 was designed to be the most realistic and fun-to-play snowboarding videogame available,'' said Jeffrey Fox, vice president, marketing, 989 Studios. ''We have even taken a page out of our licensed sports games playbook and motion captured actual snowboarders to provide the most realistic experience in any snowboarding videogame.''

Gamers will experience the breathtaking beauty of numerous realistic runs as they compete on 34 newly designed courses with razor sharp turns, intimidating jumps, unforgiving moguls and slippery ice. With its advanced 3D game engine, Cool Boarders 3 lets you feel every rock, bump, ice patch and jump, while competing on five diverse and tenacious mountains.

For those who feel up to the challenge, there are two hidden courses: Avalanche Run -- where gamers must maneuver through a tight course while trying to outrun an avalanche, and the Tree Run -- a long, narrow run, which demands flawless control in order to avoid hitting an obstacle course of trees.

Depending on the gamers own personality, there are 20 different snowboarding competitors to choose from, each with their own unique styles, strengths and weaknesses. To further increase the realism of the Cool Boarders 3 experience, professional snowboarders' signature moves have been motion captured to provide the most realistic snowboarding game animations possible.

Players select from 22 authentic snowboards, which include sixteen Burton Snowboards and six Ride Snowboards, each created with real performance ratings for acceleration, control, responsiveness and flexibility.

For the adventurous snowboarder, Cool Boarders 3 is packed with 35 real jaw-dropping snowboarding maneuvers and thousands of combos like Front Side 540's, Back Side Ally-Oops, Back Flips, Tail Grabs and 360's. Whether gamers are sticking a Misty in the Half Pipe or hitting a 720 Back flip in the big air competition, they are destined to have an adrenaline pumping experience. Cool Boarders 3 is a 989 Studios production, developed by Idol Minds, LLC.

Cool Boarders 3 Key Features

- One or two-player action allows friends to compete head-to-head
- Choice of 20 daredevil snowboarders, each with specific attributes, skill strengths and weaknesses
- Select from 22 authentic snowboards: sixteen Burton Snowboards and six Ride Snowboards, each individually designed with their own performance rating
- 34 new, beautifully designed courses with razor sharp turns, intimidating jumps, massive moguls and slippery ice
- Tons of snowboarding tricks including the Reverse 360(degree),

Front Side 540's, Rodeo, Misty, Flips, Board Slides and Tailgrabs

- Five challenging mountains including Powder Hill, Mt. Koji, Devil's Butt, Alps and Mt. Everest
- For the first time in any snowboarding game, players will be able to fight other snowboarders on the course in the heat of competition
- State of the art 3D game engine featuring polygonal characters, unprecedented courses and real time rendering that provide the most realistic, entertaining snowboarding experience
- Race against opponents in six World Class Events including the Downhill, Boarder Cross and Slalom events or compete in the tricks competition while boarding in the Half-Pipe, Big Air and Slope Style Events
- Two hidden courses -- Avalanche and Tree Run -- where flawless control is mandatory

Electronic Arts to Ship ESPN Digital Games' "X Games Pro Boarder"

Electronic Arts, the world's largest interactive entertainment software company, today announced it will soon release ESPN Digital Games' 'X Games Pro Boarder' on both the PC and PlayStation.

X Games Pro Boarder is the only snowboarding game that features eight of the world's best professional snowboarders. In addition, the game's soundtrack will include tracks from several well known alternative bands including the Foo Fighters, Lunatic Calm, Rancid and Pennywise, to name a few.

The game will be published by Electronic Arts (EA) under its new action game division. Frank Gibeau, vice president of marketing for EA, said, 'We are very excited about the addition of X Games Pro Boarder to our line-up of quality games. There is already a tremendous amount of buzz and anticipation for X Games Pro Boarder, as it is the game that truly captures the snowboarding lifestyle, including professional snowboarders, signature moves, boards, gear, courses, music and attitude.'

X Games Pro Boarder is the only snowboarding game in which players can ride as their favorite pro, compete against the best snowboarders in the world and pick their own line down a 3-D mountain with no boundaries. The game will feature nine intense levels of gameplay that mirror the broadcast presentation of the Winter X Games, the signature winter alternative sports competition featuring the world's best athletes. The PlayStation version can be played by 1 - 2 individuals and PC version will support up to eight players via LAN or the Internet.

3DO Ships Vegas Games 2000 For PC

REDWOOD CITY, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Oct. 23, 1998--The 3DO Company this week began shipment of Vegas Games 2000, the fifth title in the award-winning Vegas Games series.

An easy-to-play collection of twenty-five classic casino games, Vegas Games 2000 features new high-resolution graphics and simple 'plug-n-play' set-up for matching wits with friends and family over the Internet.

Whether you're a first-time player or a keno king, there's something for everyone in Vegas Games 2000, including Video Poker (five versions), Slots (five versions), Blackjack (four versions), Video Keno, Roulette, Craps, and more. Card sharks can ante up in the poker lounge, where 5 card stud, 5 card draw, 7 card stud and Texas Hold 'em are always ready to go.

'Everyone will find something they love to play in this package,' said Trip Hawkins, founder and CEO of The 3DO Company. 'The simple interface makes it easy for both savvy players and novices to jump in and play, even over the Internet, and the rich sound effects and graphics make for an absorbing experience that's just plain fun.'

Players may choose to compete against up to six other players, either human or computer, in 'table' games for free over a network or across the Internet via Mplayer.com(tm), the Internet's fastest growing multiplayer game service. Vegas Games 2000 players can talk gaming strategy with other enthusiasts around the world through an easy-to-use chat interface, and the 'pop-in-out' feature allows the player to join or leave games in progress at any time.

Vegas Games 2000 is now available at an estimated retail price of \$29.95 for Windows 95/98. The game is also available through direct sales at The 3DO Company by calling 800/336-3506 or online at the 3DO Internet site at <http://www.3do.com>.

ONLINE WEEKLY STReport OnLine

The wires are a hummin'!

PEOPLE... ARE TALKING

Compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@streport.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Yet another week has come and gone. It's often hard to believe that the time goes so quickly and that so little seems to get accomplished.

Heck, it seems to me that it was only yesterday that John Glenn made news around the world by going... well, by going around the world. "First American in Orbit". What a title! Even now, 36 years later, it brings to mind the true pioneering spirit that most of us can only aspire to.

All these years later SENATOR Glenn is about to make history again by becoming the oldest man to go into space. But unless you live in a cave in outer mongolia you already know all about this.

Anyone who knows me knows that I'm an absolute fanatic about space and its exploration. It's simply something we need to do. We need to explore. We need to reach. We need to stretch the limits of what we can do. John Glenn has spent a a large part of his life doing just that. I've always admired him... first as an astronaut, then as a senator, now as an astronaut again. While it's true that there are, at this very moment, as many astronauts on the space shuttle DISCOVERY as there were in the entire space program during its early years, Glenn has again succeeded in centering our attention on the skys and beyond.

Lest I make it sound like Senator Glenn is doing this out of some altruistic impulse, I should mention that Glenn probably jumped at the chance to join a shuttle mission. Wouldn't you? ANY person with a lick of adventure in them would jump at the opportunity to fly on a shuttle mission. And it's not like he's going to be a visiting celebrity either. As Payload Specialist he's a true member of the crew with responsibilities to perform and experiments to carry out.

I'm sure that there will be some heated discussions about the cost of the space program and what 'little' knowledge there may be to learn on the current mission for the next several weeks, and the results might even end up supporting that point (although I doubt it).

But as I said, it's something we need to do. In this world of corporate mergers and disposable everything, knowledge, intelligence, and courage are still not for sale. Knowledge must be earned, intelligence must be cultivated, and courage must be built from a combination of the other two.

I'm sure that it's been said thousands of times since its original pronouncement, but I'm going to say it again...

Godspeed, John Glenn.

Now let's take a look as what knowledge we can garner from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
=====

Tony Cianfaglione asks for help with his Falcon:

"I attempted to copy the contents of an 800k floppy to a 1.44mb floppy on a Falcon. Since they report a size mismatch by direct copying, I decided to add a step in the middle by simply the contents of the 800k to a folder and then transfer it the rest of the way to the high density floppy by the following steps:

- a) copy the 800k contents to a folder on the Falcon desktop
- b) format a 1.44mb PC floppy to 1.46mb Atari Falcon format
- c) copy the contents of the folder to the newly formatted floppy

After only 300k has transferred the Falcon reports:

Destination disk does not have space to continue copying. Attempting the identical transfer to an unformatted PC 1.44mb floppy renders the same report.

An info check reveals at least 111,000k remaining on the disk yet the Falcon refuses to continue copying, saying that there isn't enough room.

Anyone have any ideas as to what's happening here? Is the Falcon senile?"

Nicholas Bales tells Tony:

"[Copy the contents] To the harddrive, do you mean ? Sounds ok.

The formats are exactly the same. You shouldn't need to reformat the disk. The falcon format is 100% DOS compatible.

Sounds like maybe a bad disk. Have you tried another disk ? When you format it, does it go through ok without reporting any bad sectors and a full 1.44Mb at the end ?

[It] Could also be a bad drive, or even a bad sector on your hard disk from which it is copying.

111000 bytes or Kbytes ? That would be over 100Mb, which is not possible on a 1.44Mb floppy."

Thomas Binder tells Nick:

"Nope, if I recall correctly, the formats aren't exactly the same. TOS formats HD disks with 2 sectors per cluster, whereas DOS expects them to have 1 sector per cluster. TOS also handles DOS disks, though, but Falcon TOS has a stupid bug which causes a crash when creating folders in the root directory of disks with 1 sector per cluster."

'Louis' posts this, the first installment of STUPID GEMJING TRICKS:

"[I] Just started working with MyMail 0.70 and of course I tried the options to add sound stuff thru' Gemjing.

So now on startup MyMail says "meepmeep", at quitting it shouts "I'll be back" and in case of new mail a fanfare is sounding. (Note this will probably annoy after sometime, but it's nice to show to all the peeece suckers...)

Now the strange part: the first time I started MyMail with it, all the samples ran at half speed.

Next I did some testing with Aniplayer, and after that went back to MyMail and that time it played at normal speed.

This morning I sorted some more WAV's with Aniplayer, next worked with MyMail again and then it played at double speed...

So just to check again, I just started Aniplayer once more, played a WAV and next started up MyMail and this time it plays at right speed again...

Anyone with a clue here? I don't think Gemjing is configurable on the playing speed, but there must be something funny going on.

BTW: this fanfare at new mail keeps on repeating, making it HARD to click the "details" and next the "get mail" buttons... Erik, any chance of

changing something? The meepmeep only sounds once, so does the "I'll be back" but the sound for New Mail keeps on looping...?"

Roger Cain tells Louis:

"This sort of thing was happening to me when I was using CAB + GEMJING. I would load the KUH htm and get a VERY low-pitched MOO.

At other times I got the expected MOO.

So I don't think it is anything to do with MyMail in particular. More to do with Gemjing and, more likely, to do with other apps. which may be running at the time."

Jason Watson asks about one of my favorite subjects: hardware hacks:

"I have just fished the Atari out off the attic and set it up to see if it still works. It does, great I thought might as well get some use out of it. One problem though. It takes up a hell of a lot of desk space, Atari 520STFM, external HD, Monitor etc.

Anyway I have a an old PC AT desktop case that could easily hold everything with one problem. The keyboard.

So to my question (finnally). How easy is it to hack a PC AT keyboard onto the Atari keyboard interface. Anyone have details?"

Joshua Kaijankoski tells Jason:

"Why don't you use the ST keyboard? Just build a little case for it and get some cable etc. I did it and it worked just fine. It's so darn easy too."

Brian Becroft tells Jason:

"A good option IMO would be to get the PC/MS mouse/AT keyboard interface made by Mario Becroft, I'm using it now, without a doubt this is a great little add-on. I'm testing it, but I believe it is near ready to release."

Ian Sadler asks:

"Is it possible to run inkjet colour printers with the Atari 1040 STe and if so, does anyone have experience as to which printers will/won't work? (The info I have with mine only referes to dot & daisywheel printers)."

Lewis Simcox tells Ian:

"Not much help now as this printer has been superceeded, but Epson stylus color 11 works with the STFM."

Terry May adds:

"The DeskJets work very well with Ataris, and there are many programs out there that support them directly. Just make sure you don't get one that requires Windows. Most support Windows, but still work on other machines. However, some absolutely require Windows."

Stephen Green tells Ian:

"I've used a LEXMARK 1020 with good results on STE, STacy and (best of all) FALCON. Use HP500c or HP550c print drivers for colour. It makes Pagestream much more fun. NOTE, don't confuse it with some of the recent Windows only models Lexmark have graced the market with, these are totally software driven. You can't even change an ink cart without probs on these. ARGOS in the UK were selling the 1020 up to a few months ago for 89pounds inc colour + b/w ink carts."

Martin Wilson asks about connecting up his ST to the internet:

"First the hardware..."

Atari Falcon 32MHZ 4MEG 4.04 with hard drive etc Atari 4MEG STe with Toplink interrace and 16mhz accelerator

The provider

Uk Online (PPP only)

Previous efforts have been hopeless mainly because half way though I realised the software didn't have PPP compatibility and then there was Oasis which fared no better. However I believe Sting does provide PPP which I have downloaded and I can make use of an old Cab version.

But before I start on the wrong foot again is there any where there is a step by step guide or email addresses of people who might be able to help.

What is the best software to use?

Please note I'm not after a commercial solution. I'm using a PC at the moment and would stick with that in preference to coughing up money but would really like to get my Ataris on the net

I tried installing HSModem before and while I did install it I was never sure if I had done so completely correctly."

Louis tells Martin:

"First off, make sure you get the latest HSModem bunch (version 7 I believe), then get DRVIN, MFP and SCC in that order in your Autofolder. Have no clues as to special Falcon related stuff, but that should be in the docs anyway.

Then, I would opt for Sting (up to v. 1.15, but beware, it may be necessary to replace TCP.STX by an older version in case you experience slow speeds). Sting's OK for PPP too. Should be LAST in the autofolder.

Other options are PPP-Connect (commercial, comes with the CAB 2.5 upwards packages) or the Draconis stack (which up to now is still free for evaluation but I couldn't get it running from MagiC. TOS was OK. Don't know how compatible it is for clients based on STIK/Sting).

As a browser I'd opt for CAB (1.5 latest freeware) but the commercial 2.5, 2.6 and now 2.7 have more options and are faster. Demo's available, but then no online-browsing. Note that for CAB-on-Sting you need CAB.OVL from Dan Ackerman, CAB-on-PPPConnect uses CAB.OVL from the package). Other browsers: Adamas (part of the Draconis stuff) but I had nightmare

experiences with it, Wensuite (commercial but simply a laugh; it's a No-GO).

For E-mail, FTP, IRC, Telnetting there is a broad variety of clients available. Nice option is Newsie, which does Newsgroups (on- and offline), FTP, E-mail and basic webbrowsing (no graphics).

Oasis was abandoned and from what I gathered was messy too. No regrets!

Best thing is to check with UK-online users for a correct Sting setup."

Bill Platt adds:

"Use STing for PPP. Use HSmodem(drvn and scc) you do not have to change any settings.

Put drvin then scc then sting in you auto folder.

put dialer.acc in you root directory put the *.cpx in your cpx directory.

The difficult part is setting up the script file.

I had a hard time with the script until I found out that my ISP dynamically sets the IP address. The only info I needed in the script was the phone number, name and password.

CAB 1.5 works fine with STing and so does Newsie."

Paul Williamson tells Martin:

"I do not know which provider you are using, but I have found zetnet really good. They have support for Atari users and you should be able to get sample scripts to help with setting up STinG.

Mail me direct if you want more details."

Bill Platt now posts:

"I need to access a few web sites which have streaming stock quotes. CAB cannot handle these, actually CAB doesn't seem to be able to login to these sites with the password. Kinda like it won't log onto Yahoo's investment challenge. I also need to access servers which use proprietary software that's only available for Windoze and Mac and Unix.

Is Mint a Unix variant? also Would my Falcon be slower runing mint/linux/netbsd?"

Ronald Hall tells Bill:

"I can't comment on whether or not Mint will help with your CAB problem, but as to speed...Mint/Naes/Thing is much faster than any other OS I've tried on my Falcon. (note that I've not tried Magic).

For an example, even though I'm running quite a few more "layers" and apps just to get at my Thing desktop, its still faster. Programs like Aniplay-give a higher fps from the desktop than from Neodesk/Geneva I can run the lines program that comes with Multitos, and its easily twice as fast as my Neodesk/Geneva setup, and just as fast as single- TOS. This is under GEM. If you run a Unix port from a virtual console, then the scrolling/general speed is remarkable. Also, I can run more apps at the

same time with much less slowdown than Neodesk/Geneva or plain Multitos.
Hope this helps some."

Jo Even Skarstein tells Bill:

"MiNT itself won't help you much, but since your problem most likely is
the CAB.OVL you're using the CAB.OVL for MiNT/MiNTnet might."

Well folks, that's about it for this week. Tune again next time and we'll
talk some more about what's being discussed on the UseNet. Remember:
while the John Glenn is in orbit, keep your eyes on the skys. And
always, always keep your ears open so you don't miss what they're saying
when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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EDITORIAL QUICKIES

A photographer from a well known national magazine was assigned to cover the fires at Yellowstone National Park. The magazine wanted to show some of the heroic work of the fire fighters as they battled the blaze.

When the photographer arrived, he realized that the smoke was so thick that it would seriously impede or make it impossible for him to photograph anything from ground level. He requested permission to rent a plane and take photos from the air. His request was approved and arrangements were made. He was told to report to a nearby airport where a plane would be waiting for him.

He arrived at the airport and saw a plane warming up near the gate. He jumped in with his bag and shouted, "Let's go!" The pilot swung the little plane into the wind, and within minutes they were in the air.

The photographer said, "Fly over the park and make two or three low passes so I can take some pictures."

"Why?" asked the pilot. "Because I am a photographer," he responded,

"and photographers take photographs."

The pilot was silent for a moment; finally he stammered, "You mean you're not the flight instructor?"

John Hole/WUGNET [Enfield,Middlesex,UK]

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